Lower Walnut Creek Restoration

The Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Project is a reevaluation study of a channel constructed in the 1960's by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that responds to new endangered species listing and regulatory requirements that restrict traditional channel operation and maintenance. The study is intended to identify channel modifications that will allow the Flood Control District, as the local sponsor, to maintain the channel flood conveyance while meeting regulatory requirements and restoring and enhancing habitat.

The Lower Walnut Creek Project incorporates a new way of approaching the traditional methods of operating and maintaining a flood control facility. The existing channel is a classic Army Corps of Engineers trapezoidal earth channel that requires ongoing de-silting maintenance. The alternative approach will be to move the channel levees back in the lower reaches to provide additional capacity for floodwaters and to create floodplains while reducing de-silting costs and creating additional wetlands, riparian habitat and revegetation potential.

Limitations on the District's maintenance activities in the Lower Walnut Creek channel have resulted in incremental reductions in its flood conveyance capacity. Further reductions in conveyance capacity will increase the likelihood of localized flooding in the cities of Martinez and Concord and the unincorporated community of Pacheco.

The project will also explore the feasibility of providing fish passage farther upstream past the first major drop structure for listed species such as steelhead and Chinook salmon. In the past few years, the number of migrating salmon blocked at the drop structure has garnered significant media attention.

The completed Lower Walnut Creek project will greatly benefit the human and wildlife population in the watershed by providing:

- Improvements in fish habitat for listed or endangered species such as steelhead and Chinook salmon;
- A sustainable flood protection facility that serves a population of more than 400,000 residents in central Contra Costa County; and
- Increased opportunities for recreation by expanding the existing regional trail network.

Total Cost of Project and Budget Breakdown:

Total cost \$3,630,000 Federal cost share \$1,815,000 Flood Control District cost share \$1,815,000

The 50% local share is funded by the Contra Costa Flood Control District and Water Conservation District. The 50% Corps of Engineers share is funded by the federal government.

For additional information on lower walnut creek, please visit our project website: www.lowerwalnutcreek.org